

Put Some Spring in Your Step

Do you remember how excited you were to get up early in the morning, eat your breakfast, then dash out the door, just to be outside? “Don’t forget your coat.” or “Be careful crossing the street” were the last words you heard your Mom shout as you jumped the threshold of the front door to begin your journey to wherever your imagination took you.

My time spent in Ipswich, England, as a child proved you could go swimming in 70-degree temperatures and not freeze to death. For three years, I rode my bike around the neighborhood, climbed fruit trees, and waited until the thermometer broke 69 degrees to join my school friends in the local public pool. Life was great, pleasures were simple, and moving my body wasn’t a conscience effort. I moved without an agenda, had no exercise plan or pedometer (to be sure I walked long enough), and there was no trainer telling me if I was using proper form. I got up, ate, and went.

One thing that stands out—especially as I reminisce about my early years—is the fact that no matter where I lived, children were always playing... outdoors! We were like the traditional postman: “Through rain, snow, sleet, or gloom of night,” nothing prevented us from our appointed, fun. Odd, isn’t it, that today we have to prod and bribe our family members just to get them off the couch, away from the television or video games, in order to do what most of us embraced in our youth. “Ah, what a world, what a world.”

Lucky for us in the Lone Star State, temperature is seldom a factor that prevents outdoor activities. Unlucky for us, we have gotten into the habit of work, rest, eat, rest again, and work. We have embraced this pattern so much that we don’t set aside time for fun, pure simple fun. Well now is the time to get a spring back into our step, and I know exactly what we can do.

We can begin today by planning purposed fun! I suggest some ideas we can all implement with our spouse, children, and friends to make this time of year our “springboard” to fulfilled relationships and good health. Yes, good health can be the by-product of fun, I promise. Listed below are practical tips we can all embrace.

- Make a hopscotch board on your sidewalk—don’t let age deter you—and challenge family members or neighbors to a weekend competition. Winner chooses a restaurant for dinner and gets to bring a friend. (If they’re younger than 7, they can choose a television show or movie)
- Map out some locations around town that include up-hill and downhill climbing. Make walking sticks out of nearby cedar tree limbs; strip the bark down to the shiny wood. Then challenge some neighbors to a family hike. (Be sure to start out slow and simple – short distances ensure quick recovery.) Afterwards invite them to your place for a backyard Bar-B-Q and be sure to serve our Suck-the-Chip-Dry salsa (see recipe in my e-zine).
- Create a family garden. No matter the size of your property, you can build a raised-bed garden (check local lumber stores for a book or go online). Then plant vegetables you’ve never tried before. Or if you have never had a garden, plant the regulars – tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, radishes, green beans, and don’t forget, the jalapenos. Be sure to check the length of time to maturity and plan a harvest party with your neighbors or church family.

There you go, some tips to get you and your family started toward healthier living. Incorporate these fun times into your weekly routine and embrace the joy that is sure to follow.

There is one key I need to mention. To ensure your step always includes some “spring,” *you must choose to make the change, and then you must put feet to your decision and do it.* It is by taking immediate action that we see long lasting positive

results. Enjoy your family-and-friends time, eat well, and take an extra hike for me.

Linda Goldfarb is a national speaker, certified physical fitness specialist, and nutrition coach. She hosts the syndicated radio talk show Not Just Talkin' the Talk, based out of San Antonio, Texas.

For the original article, visit .